

CHARIVARIA.

No one, we fancy, was surprised, though many were pained, to hear that Mr. LLOYD GEORGE was confined the other day to his house by doctor's orders.

The WAR MINISTER is said to have advised the CHANCELLOR not to worry about the paucity of doctors for his Insurance scheme. He pointed out that the Territorials, in spite of a lack of numbers, are an enormous official success.

Southend Council has decided to extend the season next year from Easter to the middle of October. Why not carry it on till Christmas and so make sure of some summer weather?

At Folkestone last week, there was what is described as a slight earthquake shock. Although it is now supposed to have been caused by a passing motor omnibus this will not prevent the district from describing itself in future as an English Riviera.

When the French liner *Touraine* arrived at New York last week, ex-President CASTRO of Venezuela was removed by an immigration officer, and taken to the detention pen at Ellis Island. The EX-PRESIDENT showed some indignation at finding that the pen was mightier than the sword.

Nearly 600 English wild song-birds are being despatched to British Columbia. We understand that on their arrival, before being dispersed, they will give a grand massed concert at a Victoria music-hall.

We give the story for what it is worth. It is said that a sub-editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette* recently submitted to an examination at the hands of a phrenologist. "Marvellous headlines!" reported the Professor.

"No Dictation!" cried *The P. M. G.* "Hooray!" shouted Tommy, whose weak point is spelling.

The Bishop of CARLISLE, in his New Year pastoral, has been inveighing against such of the clergy as "seem afflicted with incurable indolence." If matters do not mend in this respect it is thought that the spinsters of England

may be called upon to cease giving to the objects of their adoration worked slippers and smoking caps, which have an undoubted tendency to encourage a love of ease and luxury.

A contemporary is advising its readers, when advertising for servants, to mention what attractions they have to offer. The newly-married couple who are able to announce that their glass and china is absolutely new and has never been broken before should be able to secure the pick of the market.

The following notice appears in the hall of a Mürren hotel:—"The Turkey Trot and Allied Dances are prohibited in this Hotel." It was no doubt in order to avoid hurting Ottoman susceptibilities that the dances of the Allies were included in the ban.

The Ideal School.

"BUXTON COLLEGE.

Next term commences on Tuesday, September 17th."—*Advt. in "Yorkshire Post."*

"Biblical students know about Euhakore," says *The Glasgow Herald* with some truth—though personally we had to refresh our memory with the *Encyclopaedia*. *The Glasgow Evening Times*, however, reproduces the statement as "Bibulous students know about Euhakore." We may expect, then, to hear something more about it on Boat-Race Night.

"The toast was drunk with enthusiasm, after which Mr. J. P. Simpson sang 'Bonnie wee thing,' while the Piper played 'My love's but a lassie yet.'"—*Madras Mail*. Mr. SIMPSON evidently thought that the Piper was playing "Bonnie wee thing."

J. H. TAYLOR, in an article entitled "Golf at Rome":

"A golfer cannot look upon the features of the dying gladiator, immortalised in the famous statue, and think of the magnificent courage and splendid devotion to his Emperor that brought him to his untimely end, without it being impressed upon his mind that the descendants of such men must possess all the characteristics that go to make a successful player."

News of the World.

Nor can a player at Stoke Poges meditate upon the wonderful flow of language revealed in the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* "with-

out it being impressed upon his mind" that GRAY would have known what to say had he ever topped into the pond.

Then and Now.

THE damosels of long ago
Were ever nice when they said "No";
They hinted, in their honied way,
At other flowers as sweet as they,
And proffered to the blighted swain
A sister's love to ease his pain.
But things have changed in this respect,
And modern maids, when they reject,
Just give their heads the tiniest toss
And tersely snap "Abso. imposs."

"BACUP SENSATION.

POLICEMAN NOT GUILTY OF SHOPBREAKING."
Is this so unusual at Bacup?



Miniature Liveried Official. "ERE! 'OO YER GLAIRIN' AT? 'AVEN'T YER NEVER SEEN NONE OF US COMMISSIONAIRES BEFORE?"

It is sometimes a little difficult to know how to pass the long Winter evenings. We strongly recommend as a pass-time an attempt to solve some of the advertisements in our newspapers. For example, among its "Situations Wanted" we find the following in *The Daily News*:—

MINDER.—Whis., Babs, Plts., 4-tn., Bk., Wk., Com., qk., exp., rel., ex. refs.

In this instance our guess at the truth would be that the advertiser is willing to look after whiffs (*i.e.* to keep cigars from going out), babies, plaintiffs, half-tons, bankrupts, workmen, commissionaires, quacks, ex-presidents, relatives, excise-men, and referees (the last presumably on Paris football-grounds).

THE PREMIER AND THE BIRD.

[Reflections on a soft Winter; with acknowledgments to his friend, Mr. W. BEACH THOMAS.]

Now any morning you may hear,
Before the pinks of dawn appear,
Where on the sombre boughs they sit,
Mavis and robin, wren and tit,
Piping their introductory bars
Without respect of calendars;
And, what is worse, without regard
To the convenience of the bard,
Caught napping in the New Year's
prime
All unprepared with vernal rhyme.

These hints, which early birds convey,
That this is now the month of May
Are of a rudimentary kind,
Appealing to the common mind.
But there are other marks, not missed
By the accomplished ruralist—
More subtle signs, half hidden from us,
That don't escape my friend, BEACH
THOMAS.

Thus, in his rambles round the place,
His beady orbs have marked a brace
Of slugs—a most unusual thing—
Strolling about as though 'twere Spring;
Also a snail (he noticed that)
Taking the air without its hat.

Likewise of flowers he makes report
Citing the more precocious sort.
With piercing glance he clapped his eye
on

The undefeated Dandelion,
Fool's Parsley, nauseous to the nose,
Dead Nettle and the rathe Primrose.
By wooded walks and hedgerow ways he
Chatted with Kex and modest Daisy,
With Shepherd's Purse and Periwinkle
And Canterbury Bells a-tinkle,
And, quoting WORDSWORTH, line by line,
Lunched with the Lesser Celandine.

Further he saw a roomy nest,
Fruit of a gay cock-sparrow's zest,
Built for his young *fiancée's* use;
And, should the Winter keep its truce,
Our THOMAS, in a week or so,
Should hail the swallow's Northward
Ho!

And in his note-book scribble, "Hark!
I hear the cuckoo's opening bark!"

Alas for faith that meets the shock
Of disillusion's nasty knock,
Of frosts that blight the ardent blood
And a sad nipping in the bud!
Yet how can simple bird or plant
Help making these mistakes? They
can't.

Innocent little dears, that lack
A knowledge of the Almanack,
And think that, like last Summer
(shame!)

Winter is gone before it came.
And even minds of older make
Sometimes commit a like mistake—

ASQUITH, for instance, though, you'd
say,

He ought by now to know his way
About the circling seasons' schedule
And have it perfect in his head, you'll
Find that he holds the strange impres-
sion

That this is still an Autumn session!

Ye who would have your top-notes clear
When April's actual self is here,
Don't, in the depth of Winter, sing
The airs of Autumn or of Spring!
Shun the unseasonable strain,
And spare your throats; nor, like those
twain,

The Songster and the Man of State,
Ignore the need to hibernate!

But, if you still insist on humming
Tunes of a day long dead or coming;
If you decline to take a rest
And *must* get something off your chest;
Then, of the two types, both absurd—
Statesman or tomtit—*play the bird!*
O. S.

BLANCHE'S LETTERS.

NEW YEAR'S NEWS.

West Boggleshire Manor.

DEAREST DAPHNE,—Here, at Bosh
and Wee-Wee's, we've been having a
lovely time out with the West Boggle-
shire—positively the one and only
motor-hunt! We all follow in motors,
and the quarry is a motor-fox! Bosh,
who's Master, is naturally very proud
of it. He says it was the only way
out of the difficulties made by those
absurd farmer-people, with their com-
plaints about their silly poultry being
eaten. Our motor-fox gives us simply
glorious runs, and then when hounds
break him up he can quite easily be put
together again. If anyone earns the
brush it's just unhooked and handed
to him (or her), and then it's hooked
on again. By next season Bosh says
perhaps he'll have a pack of motor-
hounds as well.

If we were men, dearest, I'd say,
"Hats off to Lady Manœuvrer!" for
really and truly she is a clever woman,
et elle connaît son monde as well as any
of us, and better than most. This is
a preface to the news that one of the
twins is actually—but wait!

Marigold and Bluebell, as you know,
what with their height, their twin-
hood, their constant rushing round and
chattering about nothing, their ever-
lasting, "Oh, isn't it absolutely top-
hole!" and their mother's strenuous
efforts on their behalf, have been, for
quite several years now, a sort of
double landmark, poor dear things!
(It was Norty who first called them
Reculvers.) Well, last July, when every-
body left town, the Manœuvrers went

to rusticate in some remote spot, and
nothing more was heard of them till
one began to meet them again in the
autumn at country houses. And then,
my dear, one noticed a change. Mari-
gold, it appeared, had retired from
business and made over her share of
the joint stock-in-trade, the high spirits,
rushing round, chattering about nothing,
and "Oh, isn't it absolutely top-hole!"
to Bluebell. She was quiet, silent, *pré-
occupée*, wore a diamond marquise on
her left third, and a dreamy, always-
thinking-of-him expression on her face.
There she sat, twirling her ring and
smiling to herself. And several men
who before had scarcely seemed aware
of her existence became quite *épris* of
her in this altered state of things, and
made immense efforts to get her to
talk and laugh as she used; but they
were answered either at random or not
at all.

Of course Marigold was asked about
her engagement, but all she would ever
say was, "We're going to keep our
little romance quite to ourselves. We
don't want it spoiled by being an-
nounced in the papers and gossiped to
rags by all of you. He's gone back to
his duties in India and he'll be coming
home by-and-by, and that's all you're
any of you going to know!"

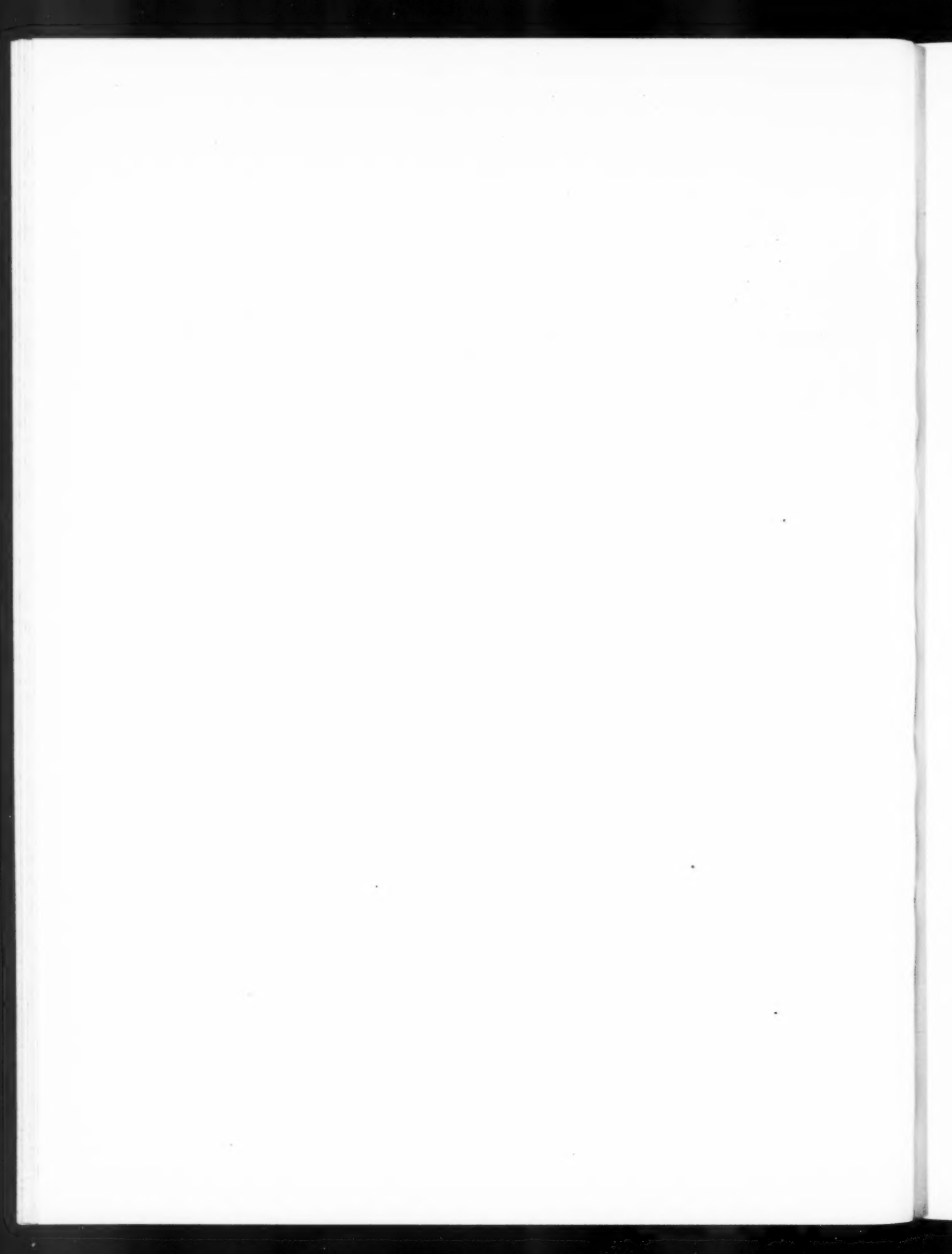
Of those who fancied the idea of cut-
ting out this absent hero of romance, the
chief was the Duke of Derwent, whom
the Manœuvrers gave up in despair ages
ago. Derwent, who never yet wanted
anything unless it belonged to some-
body else, was quite in the first flight
of Marigold's new-found *soupirants* and
by degrees became utterly and entirely
set upon eclipsing the Absent One.
The more Marigold wouldn't pay any
attention to what he said and the more
she sat in corners twirling her ring and
dreaming, the more Derwent persisted,
till at last, when they were both at the
Dunstables' with a large party, he
succeeded in persuading her to forget
"the other fellow" and elope.

They went to town, and were married
"on the 20th of December, suddenly, at
the Registrar's," as Norty put it. Of
course, when the knot was fast tied,
Derwent was sorry. But there was
still a drop of sweetness in his cup.
"How long will it be before that other
fellow knows you've shunted him and
found someone you like better?" he
asked with a chuckle when the 'moon
was about a week old. His new duchess
flung her arms round his neck. "Oh,
Bobby darling," she yelled, for all and
more than all her old high spirits had
come back, "you're the only man in
the world for me. There's no 'other
fellow,' and there *never was!* It was
Mamma's idea that one of us should



TURKEY IN WONDERLAND.

TURKEY (*observing fabulous Phoenix rising from its ashes*). "THAT'S A TRICK EVERY BIRD OUGHT TO KNOW. WONDER IF I'M TOO OLD TO LEARN IT."





THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOMENT.

Growler (to distressed harrier). "KEB, SIR?"

seem to be engaged, and we drew lots, and it fell to me; and Mamma bought that ring and coached me up in the part; and *didn't* I do it well? Oh, Bobby darling, wasn't it absolutely top-hole!"

Talking of runaway marriages, there's quite a small slump just now in regular, conventional, white satin and orange-blossom functions—St. Agatha's and half-a-dozen bishops, church crowded, everybody there—and people are taking to sneaking off to some weird church in the City or the suburbs and being married without a sound. The Oldlands went to town last week for the wedding of Veronica, the eldest girl—quite a nice match, with everyone's approval. The afternoon before the marriage-day, when everybody in town was at Oldlands House for the "Wedding Present Tea," in walked to-morrow's bride and groom in travelling kit. "Awfully sorry, people," said Veronica, "that you've all been asked to the show to-morrow, because there won't be one! Teddy and I were married this morning at St. Hildred's, Islington, and we're off now to Friesenberg for the ski-ing."

Oh, my dearest and best, such a simply horrid thing has happened here! I'm afraid '13 will be a most odious year for your poor Blanche! On New Year's Eve we were all *enormously* careful about the proper observances—'13 being such a sinister number. Bosh said he'd tried to get some hunchbacks to meet us, but all the hunchbacks were engaged ages ago for the New Year! Josiah, who's abroad on business, sent me a wire during the evening with such stodgy, Victorian wishes for the New Year that we all quite shrieked over it. As midnight approached we looked about for our First Foot. The darkest man in the party was a Col. Briggs, whom Bosh and Wee-Wee met abroad somewhere last year. He had black hair and moustaches. He didn't seem enthusiastic about the job, but at five minutes to twelve we sent him out at a side door, and the front door was set open to let in the New Year and the First Foot. Then we danced the St. Sylvester's waltz, with the dear old custom of one's partner saluting one as midnight begins to strike. Someone said the salute should be given at the *first* stroke of midnight, and someone

else said it should be given at the *last* stroke. Norty said they'd better make sure of being right by giving it at *each* stroke! And so we danced, and midnight struck, and the bells of West Boggleshire church rang out, and the Briggs man came in, and we all wished each other everything nice.

Next day, when some of us were chatting it over, someone said suddenly, "I wonder if the Briggs man is *really* dark!" "But what a hideous thought!" I cried. And then a sort of panic seized us. Piggy de Lacey suggested, "I might get my fellow to ask his man. But it wouldn't be quite cricket, would it?" "Never mind that," we all gasped; "our happiness, our very lives depend upon it. Go, best of Piggies, and find out." And Piggy went. Presently he came back. He looked at us with a composite sort of expression on his face. "Well?" we all asked in chorus. "Well," said Piggy, "I got my fellow to ask his man." "Well," we shrieked, "and what did he say?" Piggy looked round at us all again. "He said, 'Before the Colonel's air turned *grey* it was *red*!'"

Ever thine, BLANCHE.

MORE SUCCESSFUL LIVES.

VII.—THE ADVENTURER.

LIONEL NORWOOD, from his earliest days, had been marked out for a life of crime. When quite a child he was discovered by his nurse killing flies on the window-pane. This was before the character of the house-fly had become a matter of common talk among scientists, and Lionel (like all great men, a little before his time) had pleaded hygiene in vain. He was smacked hastily and bundled off to a preparatory school, where his aptitude for smuggling sweets would have lost him many a half-holiday had not his services been required at outside-left in the hockey eleven. With some difficulty he managed to pass into Eton, and three years later—with, one would imagine, still more difficulty—managed to get superannuated. At Cambridge he went down-hill rapidly. He would think nothing of smoking a cigar in academical costume, and on at least one occasion he drove a dogcart on Sunday. No wonder that he was requested, early in his second year, to give up his struggle with the Little-go and betake himself back to London.

London is always glad to welcome such people as Lionel Norwood. In no other city is it so simple for a man of easy conscience to earn a living by his wits. If Lionel ever had any scruples (which, after a perusal of the above account of his early days, it may be permitted one to doubt) they were removed by an accident to his solicitor, who was run over in the Argentine on the very day that he arrived there with what was left of Lionel's money. Reduced suddenly to poverty, Norwood had no choice but to enter upon a life of crime.

Except, perhaps, that he used slightly less hair-oil than most, he seemed just the ordinary man about town as he sat in his dressing-gown one fine summer morning and smoked a cigarette. His rooms were furnished quietly and in the best of taste. No signs of his nefarious profession showed themselves to the casual visitor. The appealing letters from the Princess whom he was blackmailing, the wire apparatus which shot the two of spades down his sleeve during the coon-can nights at the club, the thimble and pea with which he had performed the three-card trick so successfully at Epsom last week—all these were hidden away from the common gaze. It was a young gentleman of fashion who lounged in his chair and toyed with a priceless straight-cut.

There was a tap at the door, and Masters, his confidential valet, came in.

"Well," said Lionel, "have you looked through the post?"

"Yes, Sir," said the man. "There's the usual cheque from Her Highness, a request for more time from the lady in Tite Street with twopence to pay on the envelope, and banknotes from the Professor as expected. The young gentleman of Hill Street has gone abroad suddenly, Sir."

"Ah!" said Lionel, with a sudden frown. "I suppose you'd better cross him off our list, Masters."

"Yes, Sir. I had ventured to do so, Sir. I think that's all, except that Mr. Snooks is glad to accept your kind invitation to dinner and bridge-to-night. Will you wear the hair-spring coat, Sir, or the metal clip?"

Lionel made no answer. He sat plunged in thought. When he spoke it was about another matter.

"Masters," he said, "I have found out Lord Fairlie's secret at last. I shall go to see him this afternoon."

"Yes, Sir. Will you wear your revolver, Sir, as it's a first call?"

"I think so. If this comes off, Masters, it will make our fortune."

"I hope so, I'm sure, Sir." Masters placed the whisky within reach and left the room silently.

Alone, Lionel picked up his paper and turned to the Agony Column.

As everybody knows, the Agony Column of a daily paper is not actually so domestic as it seems. When "MOTHER" apparently says to "Floss," "Come home at once. Father gone away for week. Bert and Sid longing to see you," what is really happening is that Barney Hoker is telling Jud Batson to meet him outside the Duke of Westminster's little place at 3 A.M. precisely on Tuesday morning, not forgetting to bring his jemmy and a dark lantern with him. And Floss's announcement next day, "Coming home with George," is Jud's way of saying that he will turn up all right, and half thinks of bringing his automatic pistol with him too, in case of accidents.

In this language—which, of course, takes some little learning—Lionel Norwood had long been an expert. The advertisement which he was now reading was unusually elaborate:

"Lost, in a taxi between Baker Street and Shepherd's Bush, a gold-mounted umbrella with initials 'J. P.' on it. If Ellen will return to her father immediately all will be forgiven. White spot on foreleg. Mother very anxious and desires to return thanks for kind enquiries. Answers to the name of Ponto. *Bis dat qui cito dat.*"

What did it mean? For Lionel it had no secrets. He was reading the

revelation by one of his agents of the skeleton in Lord Fairlie's cupboard!

Lord Fairlie was one of the most distinguished members of the Cabinet. His vein of high seriousness, his lofty demeanour, the sincerity of his manner endeared him not only to his own party, but even (astounding as it may seem) to a few high-minded men upon the other side, who admitted, in moments of expansion which they probably regretted afterwards, that he might, after all, be as devoted to his country as they were. For years now his life had been without blemish. It was impossible to believe that even in his youth he could have sown any wild oats; terrible to think that these wild oats might now be coming home to roost.

"What do you require of me?" he said courteously to Lionel, as the latter was shown into his study.

Lionel went to the point at once.

"I am here, my lord," he said, "on business. In the course of my ordinary avocations"—the parliamentary atmosphere seemed to be affecting his language—"I ascertained a certain secret in your past life which, if it were revealed, might conceivably have a not undamaging effect upon your career. For my silence in this matter I must demand a sum of fifty thousand pounds."

Lord Fairlie had grown paler and paler as this speech proceeded.

"What have you discovered?" he whispered. Alas! he knew only too well what the damning answer would be.

"Twenty years ago," said Lionel, "you wrote a humorous book."

Lord Fairlie gave a strangled cry. His keen mind recognised in a flash what a hold this knowledge would give his enemies. *Shafts of Folly*, his book had been called. Already he saw the leading articles of the future:—

"We confess ourselves somewhat at a loss to know whether Lord Fairlie's speech at Plymouth yesterday was intended as a supplement to his earlier work, *Shafts of Folly*, or as a serious offering to a nation impatient of levity in such a crisis. . . ."

"The Cabinet's jester, in whom twenty years ago the country lost an excellent clown without gaining a statesman, was in great form last night. . . ."

"Lord Fairlie has amused us in the past with his clever little parodies; he may amuse us in the future; but as a statesman we can only view him with disgust. . . ."

"Well?" said Lionel at last. "I think your lordship is wise enough to understand. The discovery of a sense of humour in a man of your eminence—"

But Lord Fairlie was already writing out the cheque. A. A. M.



Housholder (awakened). "WHAT THE— OH, LORD! ANOTHER CHRISTMAS-BOX, I SUPPOSE?"

THE WINTER SPORTSMAN.

My wife, my Oxford son, my daughters three
 (Named Mary, Ralph, Iseult, Elaine and Nesta)
 Have flown off to the Engadine to *ski*
 And skate and risk their limbs upon the Cresta,
 Their view of life, so far as I can see,
 Being to make it one continual *festa*;
 While I, the patient drudge in duty's mill,
 Remain in town and drive the daily quill.

Think not, however, that I mean to "make
 A song about it," piteously appealing
 For sympathy because my children take
 Their walks abroad while I remain at Ealing;
 I haven't got a "travel-thirst" to slake;
 Davos no more attracts me than Darjeeling;
 I loathe the cold; hotels are uninviting;
 And, lastly, London's hugely more exciting.

There's not a crossing but some taxi-cab
 May start you running for your life and floor you.
 There's not a 'bus but women try to jab
 Their horrid hatpins in your face and gore you;
 The skies, I own, are dull, the outlook drab,
 But here the human beings never bore you,
 With militants who war on all in trousers,
 And Letts who run *amok* with murderous Mausers.

Here not a week can pass completely by
 Without a missive from some moneylenders
 Offering me untold gold—I know not why;
 I just return it stampless to the senders;

Wine-merchants for my custom daily vie
 With cider-makers or with whisky-blenders,
 As keen about replenishing my cellars
 As if I were the best of ROCKEFELLERS.

Then as for games, why should I search for sport
 In the vicinity of Chiavenna,
 When I can to the gallery resort
 And see Tartaric Tim give "Shawn" Gehenna,
 Or hear the Taffies truculently snort
 Defiance at the maladroit McKENNA,
 Or watch the daily cranial distension
 Of Ministers whose names I need not mention?

Moreover, here, and here alone, one knows
 The joy of tasting Mr. GARVIN's leaders,
 Fresh and red-hot, as forth the lava flows
 And scarifies all Unionist seceders,
 Or proves the triumph that awaits our foes
 If we become a nation of free-feeders.
 (They get them two days later up at Sils,
 But there they miss his name upon the bills.)

You'll say the grapes are sour. Perhaps they are.
 The point is personal and matters little.
 I only know that Switzerland is far;
 That bobsleighs seem to me extremely kittle;
 That falls, on *ski* or skates, the system jar,
 And bones, when men are elderly, grow brittle;
 And, if I must take part in a *gymkhana*,
 Let it be held in London, not Montana.

THE PARTY.

"WHAT," I said, "is this rumour about a party?"

"Rumour?" said Francesca. "I have heard no rumours. And, if it comes to that, what is a rumour?"

"A rumour," I said, "is evidently something which you know you have not heard. It therefore follows that if you heard it you would recognise it, and, that being so, you must know what it is, for otherwise——"

"For otherwise," she said, "I should know what I don't know, and I should not be expected to wait here half the morning in order to answer idle questions."

"Since the word 'rumour' gives you pain," I said, "I will withdraw it, expressing at the same time my most sincere regret at having said anything which might——" (Loud cheers, in which the conclusion of the hon. member's sentence was lost). "But what," I added, "is all this about a party?"

"A party?" she said. "Who has said anything about a party? What *can* you mean?"

"Francesca," I said with determination, "I will be plain with you——"

"No, no," she interrupted, "not that. But, after all, why should I complain? Good looks are nothing."

"Good looks," I said, "are better than a ribald tongue."

"But some people," she said, "have got both, and that must be splendid for them."

"Evasions," I said, "will not help you. What is all this about a party on Saturday next?"

"Oh, *that*," said Francesca. "If that's what you mean, why couldn't you say it before?"

"Apparently," I said, "that is what I mean; and I have been saying it over and over again since I began."

"You should guard," she said, "against repetition. It is wearisome and unnecessary."

"What is the nature," I said, "of next Saturday's party?"

"Its nature is that it isn't really a party at all. If I said it was I have deceived you. It is a children's dance."

"But a children's dance," I urged, "is a party. It has all the qualities that distinguish a party. It causes inconvenience. It gives no enjoyment."

"You couldn't persuade the children of that. Tell them it's not to come off, and see what they say."

"Poor dears," I said, "they are ignorant. It would be useless to appeal to them. But, if they enjoy it, why are they so solemn and silent? Tell me that."

"Oh! that's only at first," said Francesca. "If you come into this room after they've been at it half-an-hour you'll find them enjoying it all right."

"Into *this* room?" I said. "Francesca, you are forgetting yourself. This is *my* room."

"Of course it is; and it's the largest room in the house, and much the best for dancing; and you're going to lend it to us for that day, like a generous true-hearted British father."

"And," I said, "all the furniture will be taken out and all my papers will be disturbed and lost, and the carpet will be removed, and the books will be put into the shelves in their wrong places. Is this what you propose?"

"Something like that," she said, "will probably happen. You wouldn't have them dance in all this litter."

"I wouldn't have them dance at all," I said. "Francesca, I forbid the moving of my writing-table."

"The writing-table," she said, "will be the first to go. But you talk as if you'd heard of all this for the first time."

"And that," I said, "is the solemn truth. No man in England is less easily surprised than—me or I; which is it, Francesca?"

"And," she said, "you don't even know your grammar.

To think that an ungrammatical man should dream of stopping a children's dance."

"I will circumvent the grammar," I said. "I am the least easily surprised man in England, but to-day, I own, you have startled me. Not one word of this dance have I ever heard whispered or——"

"No," she said, "you haven't. Every day for the past three weeks I've shouted it at you."

"Your gentle nature would never permit you to shout," I said. "But I do remember that some time ago you said quite casually that it would be a nice thing for the children to have a dance."

"There you are," said Francesca; "didn't I say so?"

"And I replied that this modern craze——"

"I know perfectly well what you replied. It did you no credit and you mustn't say it again."

"And from that moment," I went on, "you have, I suppose, been stealthily planning this dance. And Muriel and Nina and Alice were in the conspiracy, of course. But what of Frederick, my little five-year-old barbarian? How did you secure his silence? Surely he cannot approve of dancing?"

"The barbarian mind," she said, "is susceptible to the promise of ices. He believes that on Saturday a world entirely composed of ices is to be at his disposal. You had better resign yourself to the dance."

"Francesca," I said, "something dreadful ought to happen to you."

"Something dreadful," she said, "has happened."

"I know," I said. "The man who plays the piano has got the influenza."

"Worse than that."

"The greengrocer has sprained his ankle and cannot come in to pour out lemonade."

"Worse even than that," she said. "Your Aunt Matilda, who likes children in their proper place, has announced herself for a three days' visit from Friday next."

"Which serves you," I said, "absolutely right."

"And, of course," said Francesca, "you will have to devote yourself to her on Saturday. After all, she has a kind nature in spite of her sharp tongue, poor old dear."

R. C. L.

BY THE OPPOSITE ROUTE.

WHEN he was called he turned over and went to sleep again. When he got up he decided that he would get himself shaved professionally on his way to the office.

He read the newspaper solidly through breakfast. On two occasions he contradicted his wife. He took the odd piece of toast. In putting on his boots he swore quite wantonly (on the testimony of his wife).

He continued the day in the same strain of dogged laxity. At lunch he prolonged his usual interval of ninety minutes to one of a hundred-and-twenty minutes. By 5 P.M. he had smoked six cigars.

Then he telephoned to his wife to come and have dinner in town and go to a theatre, knowing that she would refuse. He thereupon carried out his programme *en garçon*, in the teeth of her imperfectly transmitted resentment.

Arriving home, he had a last unnecessary whisky and soda. Finally (as he tramped upstairs in his boots) he murmured with satisfaction, "Now you know what to expect, New Year!"

On the 2nd of January he returned inevitably—like everyone else—to the happy human mean of moderate imperfection. But—contrary to everyone else—he had the satisfaction of feeling that he was being a better man than he had set out to be.

FLIGHTING.

DEEP the ditch and very muddy,
And the time seems very long;
There's a sunset wild and ruddy,
The West roars a song;
And the dusk is just a-falling
And it's lonesome as can be
Ere the geese come in a-calling
Off the cold wet sea!

Yes, 'tis lonesome in the ditches
(Where's the whistle of the wings?)
And the dusk is full of witches
And of Big Black Things;
Funk, blue funk for him who strikes it
Has the bogey-haunted bog,
And the only one who likes it
Is a red wet dog!

He's a-twitch to hear the whicker
Of the pinions down the sky,
While the ghosts they bawl and bicker
And the gusts boom by;
And you pat him for protection—
Ah, you hardly would suppose
So much comfort and affection
In a cold wet nose!

Hark, the gaggle! Up the gun, then—
'Twas the neatest left-and-right;
"Fetch 'em, boy, and we'll be done, then,
Two's enough to-night;
Leave the shadows to their sinking,
Leave the ghosts their howling glee,
It's yourself that will be thinking
Of your hot wet tea!"

AFTERMAS.

A PROJECT is on foot, supported by a number of influential tradesmen, to inaugurate a New Season of present-giving, supplementary to Christmas and New Year's Day, to be called Aftermas. It will, it is believed, fill a long-felt want.

The origin of Aftermas is the disappointment with her own gifts recently experienced by a well-known Society lady on viewing those of her fellow guests in a country house at Yule-tide.

"Why," she exclaimed, "you seem to have received everything that I really wanted!"

"But," was the natural reply, "were you not asked what you would like?"

"I was," she said, "but I couldn't for the life of me think. Now I know."

This charming person had struck on a basic truth of life, namely that envy is stronger than choice, and it is this fundamental human foible which the New Season will do much to satisfy.

The root idea of Aftermas is the giving of the presents which we know beyond question that our friends will like. Everyone will admit that Christmas and New Year's Day rarely leave us with the best things; Aftermas will



Lift Attendant. "FOURTH FLOOR: LADIES' COSTUMES, MILLINERY, BOOTS, SHOES AND OSERY."
Breathless Old Lady (hopelessly lost). "I-I-IREMUNGRY."

Lift Attendant. "RESTAURANT, TOP FLOOR." (Whisks her up.)

do so. To some extent, it may be urged, New Year's Day ought to do so now, since it is a week later than Christmas. But as a matter of practical politics this is not so. Christmas itself is a *dies non* (as the learned say). Boxing Day is another of the same Latin bunch, and the days that immediately follow are not adapted for correspondence, even if one's friends were disposed so soon to go shopping once more, an ordeal from which they naturally shrink after their recent terrible experiences.

Thus, as a corrective to the maladroitness of Christmas benefactions, New Year's Day is of little use. But Aftermas should fulfil every condition, since it has been decided to put the date well forward, even as far as the end of January, to give everyone time

really to examine the presents of their friends and make up their minds absolutely. Lists will then be sent in and—well, they will see what they will see.

Arising out of this Aftermas movement is a scheme, much favoured in Bond Street, to set apart the second Monday in every month throughout the year as a day on which friends should exchange valuable gifts. A plan to bring back the glories of February 14 with really expensive valentines is also afoot, and there are supporters also of the birthdays of Messrs. ASQUITH, BONAR LAW, REDMOND and MACDONALD as occasions to be ear-marked for genial contests in generosity among friends. But at present the weight of the attack is being directed to the solid establishment of Aftermas.



Mother (after relating pathetic story). "Now, REGGIE, WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO GIVE YOUR BUNNY TO THAT POOR LITTLE BOY YOU SAW TO-DAY WHO HASN'T ANY FATHER?"
Reggie (clutching rabbit). "COULDN'T WE GIVE HIM FATHER INSTEAD?"

THE RENEGADE.

(A memory of Yule, and dedicated to Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, who writes innocently in "The Manchester Guardian": "Still, let not the vegetarian lift up his horn against the meat-eater: I have seen gross excesses committed in plum-pudding.")

THIS is the tragedy of Mary Smith

(My cousin), who supposed that it was criminal
To slay one's brother ox and eat him with

Mustard and what not. Bless your heart, some
women'll

Believe in anything. Each crank's a prophet.
Mary became a veg. Just now she's off it.

It started when, some month or more ago
(I will say this, that Mary did not err long),
She haled me to that house of fear and woe,

The restaurant of Mr. Ambrose Furlong:
And all about us sat (ye saints, deliver us!)
The glum-faced armies of the graminivorous.

There was a deathly silence o'er the place,
Save only when, amid the murk and stillness,
A nut went off; the food I could not face,

But trifled with some tracts on "Human Illness,"
"The Way to Better Life: Flesh Food and Nemesis,"
Till Mary finished, and we left the premises.

The scene is changed. It was the festal board,
Graced with the various honours vowed to Yule-
tide;

The turkey queened it, and the beef was lord,
But Mary, by the doctrines of her school tied,
Though wistful glances stole across her features,
Disdained to batten on her fellow-creatures.

Till, ringed with dancing flame, divinely brown,
With white hair glistening and with scarlet berry,
The Bacchant pudding in the cloth came down,
Hailed by a revel cheer; and, now grown merry,
Ev'n she, the death's head, scouting melancholy,
Was fain to eat, and cut into the folly.

When "No," I said, and stayed her with the thought,
"This is your kinsman. No, you must not do it.
The fare you ask for, by some god distraught,
Is principally made of best beef suet.
In pomp of old he ranged betwixt the hedges
(All but the plums). Where, traitress, are your pledges?"

And Mary heard, and Mary's cheek grew pale;
Her spirit strove and underwent contortion,
Then yielded suddenly, and chanced the bale.
"Hang it," she cried, and took a hefty portion.
Since when, apostate proved, she daily smothers
Her natural feelings and devours her brothers.

EVOR.



MARKING TIME.

MARY ANN (*during a hitch*). "SHALL WE EVER GET TO THE DOCTOR'S?"

CHAUFFEUR LLOYD GEORGE (*hopefully*). "OH, YES; SOONER OR LATER."

MARY ANN. "WELL, I THOUGHT I'D ASK, 'CAUSE I SEE THE TICKER'S GOING ON AS HARD AS EVER."

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

(EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.)



HOGMANAY IN LONDON.

At the New Year's Eve Supper, given by the Senior Liberal Whip by way of consolation to the Scottish Members, the Brothers WASON bring down the house.

House of Commons, Monday, December 30.—Members back again after shortest Christmas recess known to history. Nervous anxiety prevalent in Whips' Room reflected on Treasury Bench. Ambush apprehended. BANBURY'S famous manœuvre, with its practical result of adding a full week to uncanny extension of session, might encourage further effort on same lines.

Apart from other considerations effect of the successful ambush has been distinctly favourable to the Party for whose repulse it was arranged. Confident in an overwhelming majority Ministerialists had grown slack in attendance. Snap division altered that. Majorities that used normally to be somewhere about the round hundred have advanced by a score, occasionally two.

Nevertheless this first night of re-assembling of House looked forward to with apprehension. Whip circulated urging attendance of all sections of Ministerialists. Specially requested to

be in their places promptly on commencement of public business. Summons loyally obeyed. Glance round benches at Question time indicated to all whom it might concern that if there were ambuscade within precincts of House patriotic gentlemen recruited for the purpose might as well stroll in with unconcerned looks as who should say, "What a wet Christmas we have had, to be sure!"

Ministers themselves careful to turn up. Treasury Bench even inconveniently crowded. Others full both above and below Gangway. At 6 o'clock, when first division was taken, Government majority ran up to 131, with total vote of more than two to one.

Business done.—Time-table for Report Stage of Home Rule Bill arranged.

Tuesday.—If you have ever observed a middle-aged gentleman of bland countenance and military bearing strolling down a country lane, coming to what looks like innocent wisp of hay, stooping down to examine it more

closely, and finding that it covers a wasps' nest, you will get some idea of to-day's adventures of Sir REGINALD POLE CAREW, K.C.B., C.V.O. Started afternoon in quite good form. Had on paper group of questions designed to confound SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR. When SEELY, after manner of Ministers, attempted to evade attack, POLE down upon him with further question "arising out of that answer."

Possibly it was mellow satisfaction suffused by this successful sortie that lured the gallant General to destruction. However that be, debate on Report Stage of Home Rule Bill not far advanced when he came to the front. Had, he remarked, heard it said that the Opposition regarded Ireland as incurably disloyal. "I," he protested, shaking his fist at Nationalists below the Gangway, "have no feeling of that sort. But," he added, "so long as Nationalist Members preach disloyalty, so long as they practise a form of tyranny in the shape of boycotting, so long as they go

about preaching rebellion, there must be disloyalty in Ireland."

Not to be supposed that utterance of these soothing remarks ran as smoothly as they are here printed. They were punctuated by interruptions from Irish camp. DEVLIN's scornful "Oh! oh!" rising above the din, POLE turned upon him with withering glance and remarked, "The honourable Member for Belfast is the worst of the lot." Reference to boycotting bringing from same quarter enquiry, "What about the doctors?" POLE, drawing himself up with mingled air of sorrow and dignity, observed, "A very irrelevant observation."

Irrelevancy was the one thing he couldn't a-bear. Catching sight of SEELY laughing on Treasury Bench he turned aside to inquire whether SECRETARY FOR WAR had taken into his confidence his military advisers on the Committee of Imperial Defence on subject of military position of this country in event of establishment of Home Rule Parliament in Dublin? An interpolated remark from SEELY found POLE quite prepared to discuss in detail circumstances attendant upon Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

The GENERAL not only delightfully irrelevant himself but cause of bewildering irrelevancy in others. He brought to his feet that kindred spirit, WILLIE REDMOND, who stirred the SPEAKER to anguished protest.

"I have," the right hon. gentleman said, "not the faintest idea of what the honourable gentleman is alluding to, or what the resolution is, or what was the body that passed it."

This brought up GILBERT PARKER, bent on making an awful example of himself as a warning to others. WILLIE REDMOND had accused POLE CAREW of having used "disgraceful and defamatory language." GILBERT PARKER wanted to know whether such remark was in order.

"I myself," he humbly added, "was reproved by a former SPEAKER for using the word 'disgraceful.'"

SPEAKER again interposed in sterner mood. "The House," he said, "has very little time. It is called upon to discuss an important clause, and the whole of the time is being wasted in ridiculous talk."

Ridiculous talk, forsooth! WILLIE REDMOND swelled visibly like an offended turkey-cock, though he had not been mentioned. The SPEAKER's accusatory remark had been couched in general terms. But WILLIE not to be comforted.

"Sir," he said, amid cheers from Mr. FLAVIN, "I have the very greatest respect for you, but as to the character

of the remarks I feel called upon to deliver I will take leave to be the judge myself."

"Very well," said the SPEAKER, "let us assume that you have disposed of the honourable and gallant gentleman (POLE CAREW) and come to the clause under discussion."

Thus gently but firmly led back, attention was again turned upon the important measure with respect to which well-grounded complaint is made in some quarters that sufficient time is not supplied for discussion of its clauses.

Business done.—Proposed new clauses to Home Rule Bill dealt with.

New Year's Day.—Home Rule Bill on again; minds of Members more



"Ridiculous talk, forsooth!"

(MR. WILLIE REDMOND.)

engrossed by rumours of alleged happenings at supper given last night by wily Whip to Scotch Members. When PREMIER proposed that House should re-assemble on Monday, the next day's sitting bridging the space between the Old Year and the New, a cry of horror and despair went up from Scottish quarter. True patriots they, how could they see the New Year in amid the mirk of London town? Happy thought illumined ILLINGWORTH's mind. Why not ask them to supper and welcome the budding year at the bountiful table of the Hotel Cecil? So it was arranged, and the Scots Members turned up to a man as did their forbears at Bannockburn.

Proceedings of course private. But it is no secret that greatest success of the evening was the sword dance performed on the stroke of midnight by the Brothers WASON, clad in the national garb. Gog and Magog were never before seen in such apparel. It was voted most becoming.

Business done.—Guillotine working its way through Amendments on Report stage of Home Rule Bill. GENERAL CARSON, K.C.'s amendment, excluding Ulster from its operation, defeated by 294 votes against 197.

THIS BUSY WORLD.

(With acknowledgments to Mr. Punch's contemporaries.)

MR. JOHN JONES has been appointed Town Clerk of Twllony.

Struck suddenly by an idea as he was crossing the market-place yesterday, Alderman Smith-Pidson, of Bury St. Edwins, fell in a trance, from which he has not yet recovered.

Flying from tree to tree and uttering its cry as in spring, a cuckoo has been seen by an auctioneer and surveyor of Savernake.

At the age of ninety-two a labourer named Melchisedek Bo, who has lived in the same cottage for ninety-one years near Peterborough, has just died of troubles connected with third-teething.

Wagering with another man that he would drink a gallon of petrol in five minutes, a chauffeur named William Heape is now lying in a precarious condition in the Middlesbrough dispensary.

Splashed by mud from a passing motor-car, in which was a party that included Miss Dyzie Sweetling, of the Gaiety Theatre, and her *fiancé*, Lord Orde, an elderly woman named Eliza Cressbrook fell and fractured her kneecap at Oswestry.

Accused of talking in his sleep at Bermondsey, an aged man named Samuel Wigster struck his wife, a woman of sixty, so severely on the head that she is not expected to live more than twenty years.

A Long Wait.

"Even the more youthful and boisterous of the assembly waited in expectant silence while yet another twelvemonth passed."

Nottingham Guardian.

"ALARM OF FIRE ON TUBE RAILWAY.

PASSENGERS ALIGHT IN A DARK TUNNEL."

Daily News.

Alarmed Passenger. "Help! Auntie's alight again!"

From a Transvaal Notice Board:—

"Motor cyclists and others are warned against riding at an excessive speed through the village, which is at present a source of great danger to the community."

In England, too, it is widely felt among motorists that villages are a source of great danger to the community and ought to be wiped out. We look to the Road Board to do its duty.



Mother (seeing her way to curtailing holiday expenses). "AUGUSTUS, I THINK, INSTEAD OF GOING TO DRURY LANE, WE OUGHT TO TAKE THE CHILDREN TO SEE ST. PAUL'S. THEY MAY NOT HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE. I SEE IT'S CRACKING ALREADY."

LAST—AND LOST.

[“ December 27th .. Sun rises 8.7 a.m.
December 28th .. Sun rises 8.8 a.m.
December 29th .. Sun rises 8.8 a.m.
December 30th .. Sun rises 8.8 a.m.
December 31st .. Sun rises 8.8 a.m.
January 1st .. Sun rises 8.8 a.m.
January 2nd .. Sun rises 8.8 a.m.
January 3rd .. Sun rises 8.7 a.m.”

Extract from Almanack.]

DAY! (It is BROWNING's phrase, not mine)—

Day! As the Night grows faint and dies,

Like sudden meteors there shine
Aurora's splendid eyes.

O Goddess, lucent-limbed, divine,
Unknown to me (as yet) by sight,
Sparkling in gold, like ginger-ale
(So they have said who know), all hail!
Hail, dawn! Hail, day! Hail, light!

So to himself Adolphus sang—
Adolphus, reader, being I—
While all the dim-lit bedroom rang
To that melodious cry;
For the alarum's strident clang
Had shocked me from my sleep thus soon,

Who am not wont to break my rest,
Nor to inflate my tuneful chest
Till pretty nearly noon.

I'd set it with my own right hand,
That harsh alarum, five hours back,
Having just previously scanned
Whitaker's Almanack;
“So,” I had said, “I understand
This is the last day when the sun
Gets up comparatively late
(Though all too early), viz., 8.8.
Now should the thing be done!”

Yes, this was January 2.

I filled my lungs, I sang again:—
*The Dawn, by poets hymned, of hue
Brighter than Golden Rain
That on November 5 floods through
The velvet night with brilliant sheen!*
Then lie not there and grossly yawn,
But rouse thyself and see this dawn
Which thou hast never seen!

Arise, arise, Adolphus! Shame
That thou, sworn votary of the Muse,
Hast never watched that ardent flame
The radiant East suffuse!
Fate will not bring to thee the same
Rich chance till many months have sped.

Have courage! Cease those coward
sighs!

Brave the chill morning! Up! Arise!
(Adolphus stopped in bed).

A Way they have in Australia.

“MELBOURNE, Friday.—Mr. Higgs (Queensland) was upended in the House of Representatives this afternoon.”

Brisbane Daily Mail.

We at home have more respect for the dignity of Parliament.

The Luck of No. 13.

“A London newspaper of 1776 asserted that . . . ‘Washington had 13 toes and 13 teeth in each jaw.’”

A stiff mouthful. GEORGE, like so many lovers of immaculate teeth, must have put his foot in it.

From a leading article in *The Westminster Gazette*:—

“New Year's Day is a Milestone which the least observant of us can hardly fail to pass unnoticed.”

The writer, though, has failed easily. Indeed, it hardly looks as though he had tried to pass it unnoticed.

“Born on November 27 last, the little boy will, should things remain as at present, one day become Marquess of Lansdowne.”

Manchester Evening News.

Not, however, if the present Lord LANSDOWNE remains as at present.

AT THE PLAY.

"HULLO, RAG-TIME!"

I SUPPOSE that if you call a thing a "Revue," it is meant to be a satire on persons in the public eye and on current vogues and events, and I therefore assume that all the chorus-part of Messrs. PEMBERTON and DE COURVILLE's production at the Hippodrome was designed to satirise the choruses of Musical Comedy. If, as I hope, I am right, the imitation here given of the old meaningless banalities was almost too perfect, for its intention clearly escaped the intelligence of the audience, who received it with loud and unsuspecting approval, as if it were the real thing. I am not sure that even the chorus itself recognised what it was there for. But Miss ETHEL LEVEY knew all about it, and her Musical Comedy methods in the duet with the foreign huzzar were very delightful for those who appreciated her humour. On the other hand, Mr. JAMIESON DODDS, who played the part of the gallant officer, seemed to take it quite seriously.

But for the interludes between the choruses, the "Revue" would have been a tedious business, for the ugliness of rag-time dances soon gets on the nerves. The *clou* of the evening was an "Extra Turn," entitled "The Dramatists get what they want." It was almost



THE SPIRIT OF RAG-TIME.
MISS ETHEL LEVEY.

unbelievable that this was from the same pens that wrote the rag-time part, yet the programme mentioned no other authorship. The protestations of the artistes from the Music-halls—a decent dog-trainer and his wife, a perfectly respectable acrobat, with six children in common—against the ques-

tionable character of the words they were given to say in a sort of Stage Society drama, were exquisite fooling; and here again Miss ETHEL LEVEY was the soul of the fun, though Mr. HEGGIE, in a smaller and less exacting part, was just as good. It was a delightful little burlesque, and deserved a much more responsive audience.

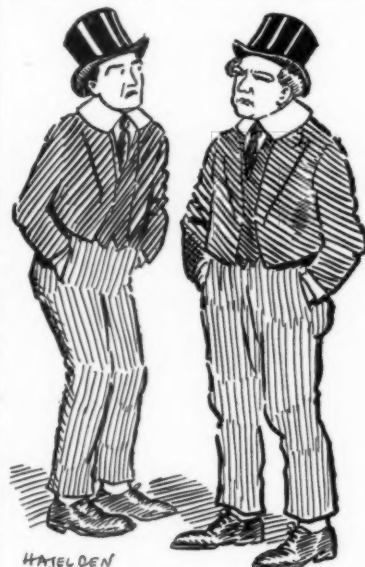
Another excellent interlude was the Sentimental Drama of the mother and her lost child (allusive to *The Tide*?), with interpolations from the body of the house. Here Miss DOROTHY MINTO was in happy vein, and the attempts made by the child (first a real child, and then, after objection raised by the L.C.C. because of the lateness of the hour, a grown-up member of the staff, quite as old as the mother) to secure paternal recognition from just anybody that came along were most acceptable.

There was nothing topical in the American dialogue between those admirable artistes, Mr. LEW HEARN and the lady who calls herself "BONITA," but it was extremely amusing. Indeed the large American element did most of the funny work of the evening, and even the actress who played *Britannia* in a Union Jack had apparently been imported from over the Atlantic, to sing the merits of the "red, white and blyew." I don't know where the chorus came from, but they were well above the average in good looks.

A few public characters were introduced, but in many cases we were left to gather their identity from the programme or the dialogue. Worse likenesses than those of Messrs. CHURCHILL, F. E. SMITH, GRANVILLE BARKER and the PRESIDENT of the Divorce Court it would be very difficult to produce. The representative of Mr. MARTIN HARVEY was more like the original, but *The Only Way* is too established an institution to ridicule at this time of day even if the impersonator had got Mr. HARVEY's voice right. But a really excellent imitation of Mr. GEORGE GRAVES was given by Mr. CYRIL CLENSY in the midst of playing the character of *Sir Wilkie Bard*; and Mr. GERALD KIRBY successfully assumed the manner of Mr. GEORGE GROSSMITH, though he could hardly hope to reproduce his legs.

For a satire on the passing hour this "Revue" was not quite catholic enough in its allusions. Its authors over-estimated the part played in our lives by the stage. There really are other things. Still, after all, there are few interests that more closely touch so many types. For the camps of the Higher Drama, the Legitimate, and Musical Comedy have little traffic with one another, and the way of the true devotee of the Halls lies apart from them all.

The audience at the Hippodrome was made of all these types—a sprinkling of the first two and strong contingents of the others; and it is matter for



HATTEL DEN

The One. "Hullo, ASQUITH!"

The Other. "Shut up, AUSTEN. Can't you see I'm WINSTON?"

The One. "Well, I'm not AUSTEN either. I'm F. E. SMITH in the programme."

compliment that the authors of this miscellany and their versatile cast should have given so much pleasure to so mixed a crowd. O. S.

From the programme of a concert at Kew:—

"Polonaiseina" . . . Chopin.
'Toreador' . . . Carnan."

Give us Faust's "Nocturneinaflat" all the time.

From a notice-board at Leicester:—

"— HOTEL.
ESTABLISHED IN THE 13th CENTURY,
RE-OPENED
UNDER ENTIRELY NEW MANAGEMENT."

No doubt the change of management was necessary, but the old place will never seem the same again.

"The eighth annual meeting of the Peace Conference was held at St. James' Palace this (Wednesday) afternoon."

Staffordshire Sentinel.

The dilatoriness of Turkey is becoming a scandal.

"Le travail de M. Knochblauch (*Kismet*) est un bon divertissement pour des peuples moins avancés en civilisation que nous ne le sommes."—*L'Opinion*.

We hope that the thousands of Britons who saw the play at the Garrick, and enjoyed it, will not take the above too much to heart.



Belated Sportsman (arriving just as hounds are moving off after breaking up their fox). "I'VE SEEN YOUR HUNTED FOX; HE'S BEHIND, JUST OVER THE ROAD."
Huntsman. "THE 'UNTED FOX IS INSIDE MY 'OUNDS, SIR."

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

IN *John of Jingalo* (CHAPMAN AND HALL) MR. LAURENCE HOUSMAN lets out a number of bees that have been swarming in his bonnet (or ought I rather to say his toque?), some of which have very acute little darts concealed about them; others, I think, are content, like the telephone, with a mere intermittent buzzing. *Jingalo* is a country whose capital may be described in the good old phrase as situated not a hundred miles from Whitehall, and it is only by an ingenious system of transpositions, and by the device of alluding quite frequently to England as a co-existent European state, that the author prevents us from saying at every turn, "How on earth could anyone dare to publish a book like this?" Mr. HOUSMAN's main thesis is that *Jingalo* is governed by a class of office-seekers (represented at any given moment by the Cabinet), who are wholly unsupported by the voice of the people, and use alike the democratic will and the institution of monarchy to serve their bureaucratic ends. Having tumbled down the palace staircase upon his head, *King John* begins to "see things," and the scope of his vision is further enlarged by conversations with his son *Max*, a Max with whose cynical detachment we somehow seem familiar. It will not come as a shock to anyone to learn that the Dramatic Censorship and Women's Suffrage are cases in which *King John* sees fit to set his counsellors at defiance; but these are only two and not, I think, the sharpest of the points which Mr. HOUSMAN has made. I admire most the monarch's decision to revive the ceremony of washing beggars' feet on Maun-

day Thursday, attended by the whole Order of Knights of the Thorn in full robes; and the epilogue: "And when their ordeal by water was over then the twelve beggars—all of guaranteed good character though not actual communicants—received with delight each a new pair of shoes and stockings, which they were able to sell immediately at fabulous prices to collectors of curiosities, chiefly Americans. And that same night twelve very happy beggars, all more or less drunk, made their appearance on the largest music-hall stage in the metropolis, where the whole scene was elaborately re-enacted in *fac-simile*, followed by a cinematograph record of the actual event." That bee stings.

I have been reading an extraordinary, not to say nightmarish, book about the Mysterious East. It is called *The White Knight* (MURRAY) and begins on board a P. & O. liner, passengers on which were *Denis Grey* and *Howell*. The former, I gathered, had come out to Egypt as the guest of his Oxford friend, *Howell*, who was not only "one of the quietest men in Balliol," but on his mother's side a Bedouin Arab. Naturally this unusual combination was not without startling results, because, as it happened, there was a high-pressure blood feud going on at the time between *Howell's* tribe and another; and hardly had the two travellers disembarked at Port Said when events began simply to hum. I have a fixed idea that had I been *Grey* I should have called the visit a failure. To begin with, having expressed a wish (the least he could do) to join his host's brotherhood, he found himself bound hand and foot and involved in the most terrifying entertainment of gongs and green lights

and brandings. Later, he had to fight for his life in a four-days' desert battle, and was only rescued by the heroine in the very moment of defeat. Well, really, I mean— Amongst other questions that occur to the sceptical reader is, "Where was Lord KITCHENER?" Briefly, Mr. T. G. WAKELING has written a sometimes exciting, but more often rather nonsensical, story about a country that he evidently knows and loves. The interest would have been stronger if the author had been less eager to combine it with instruction. The characters have a disconcerting habit of holding long natural-history dialogues in question and answer, such as I take to be unusual for men in moments of emotional stress. But the big fight in the last chapters is tremendous fun, and justifies the making of the book—for those who like that sort of thing.

In *The Letter-Bag of Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope* (JOHN LANE) MR. STIRLING provides some fascinating reading. The collection is designed to form a continuation and conclusion of two earlier works, *Coke of Norfolk and his Friends* and *Annals of a Yorkshire House*. The contents of the *Letter-Bag* mainly consist of correspondence addressed to or written by JOHN SPENCER-STANHOPE, who lived and saw wide variety of life between the years 1787 and 1873. It is impossible in the limited accommodation of this "Booking-Office" adequately to deal with the teeming pages of volumes which picture the social existence of two generations and record gossip and confidences exchanged over half a century. If the book did nothing more than rescue the memory

of Lord COLLINGWOOD from undeserved oblivion its publication would be welcome. His share in the great victory of Trafalgar was outshone by the dazzling glory of his commander and friend, NELSON. Full justice is at length done him, partly by publication of his own modest account of the great fight, though the part he played in it is only incidentally referred to. His description of the battle is a masterpiece. A passage in one of his letters of later date, protesting against a tendency on the part of the Admiralty to neglect the duty of maintaining the efficiency of the Navy, will by its exact terminology commend itself to the present FIRST LORD. "I have always found," COLLINGWOOD wrote, "that kind language and strong ships have a very powerful effect in conciliating the people." Another apophthegm, a favourite remark with JOHN STANHOPE, may recommend itself to one of Mr. CHURCHILL'S Cabinet colleagues: "The great advantage of being of old family is that you are further removed from the rascal who founded it." Both NAPOLEON and WELLINGTON figure in the correspondence, in which appear vivid glimpses of Paris after Waterloo.

Casting about me for an epithet by which I may most suitably describe *Following Darkness* (ARNOLD), I think

I shall select that often misapplied word "subtle." There is none that comes nearer to Mr. FORREST REID'S peculiar method of telling half a tale, and suggesting the rest, which you may then find out for yourself if you have interest and imagination enough. Only the other day I saw that Mr. REID was writing on "The Boy in Fiction," and certainly the list of his own books would seem to give him some claim to speak with authority. All his stories are in fact studies, extraordinarily clever and detailed and painstaking, of certain types of adolescence. In *Following Darkness*, the boy, *Peter Waring*, who is its central character and tells his own tale in the first person, is drawn with an ingenuity that is quite merciless. The result is a picture attractive, almost in spite of itself, from this quality of sincerity. For it must be confessed that on no other ground could *Peter's* be called an engaging personality. Moreover, let those who demand from a novel that it shall have a symmetrically rounded plot, or for whom boyhood, with its elusive moods and contradictions,

its romance and happiness and despair, has no sufficient charm, avoid this book. The others will accept it with appreciation and gratitude for work of a kind both beautiful and rare. Despite some obvious faults of construction (of which the Preface seems to me to be one), *Following Darkness* deserves to linger pleasantly in the memory when two-thirds of the fiction of to-day has been willingly forgotten.

There is one article that might very well have been included in *The English Character* (FOULIS) by SPENCER LEIGH HUGHES, but

has somehow or other got left out—an article on the varying value of externals. Any unprejudiced reader who took up this book and considered the very tasteful crimson-linen binding, the hand-made paper, the coloured illustrations, the wide margins, the clear lettering and the style of the printing—every chapter begins with a whole line in capitals and ends with two shortening lines like the tale of *Fury and the Mouse* in *Alice in Wonderland*—might be pardoned for saying eagerly, "Here is CHARLES LAMB at least." But with all due respect to Mr. HUGHES (who was so well-known as the *Sub Rosa* of *The Morning Leader* and has now transferred his bower to *The Daily News*) I think he would be a little disappointed. Mr. HUGHES has one or two good stories to tell, and his observation is sometimes shrewd enough. But, oh dear! there are some sad platitudes in these pages and (can it possibly be because they first appeared in the form of diurnal columns?) they are woefully periphrastic at times. But never mind. Mr. HUGHES has doubtless plenty of admirers, and he will not be annoyed if I reserve the larger share of my gratitude for Mr. FOULIS.

Winter Sport.

"THE SOUTH OGFORDSHIRE FOGHOUNDS."—*South Bucks Free Press*.



FORGOTTEN DEEDS OF VALOUR.

THE KEEPER OF THE KING'S CONSCIENCE HANDS IN HIS RESIGNATION TO RICHARD III.